

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A18

NEW YORK TIMES
11 November 1985

Letters

It's Dangerous to Tell the Press Anything

To the Editor:

Samuel Loring Morison, formerly of the Naval Intelligence Support Center, gave classified satellite photographs of a Soviet nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to a British publication. Testimony at his trial showed that the photographs revealed sensitive aspects of U.S. satellite reconnaissance capabilities. The jury convicted Mr. Morison of violating the Espionage Act and of theft.

"It's Still Not Spying" (editorial, Oct. 19) decried the conviction, saying, "Exchanges of information that have been routine in this society will make criminals of both the officials who provide it and publishers who receive it." Leaks to the world at large can damage national security in the same way as leaks to K.G.B. agents, as the judge in the Morison case pointed out in his March 12, 1985 order:

"... the danger to the United States is just as great when this information is released to the press as when it is released to an agent of a foreign government. The fear in releasing this type of information is that it gives other nations information concerning the intelligence gathering capabilities of the United

States. That fear is realized whether the information is released to the world at large or whether it is released only to specific spies."

Americans who accept positions of trust in national security agencies should understand that if they break faith with the American people and reveal the secrets to which they have access they will answer at the bar of justice.

(Rep.) BOB STUMP

Ranking Minority Member

House Select Committee on Intelligence
Washington, Oct. 23, 1985

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